IRSTI 14.35.07

DOI: https://doi.org/10.47344/qn7jrv76

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# UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY IN EFL CLASSROOMS: A COMPREHENSIVE LITERATURE REVIEW

**Abstract.** With increasing plagiarism rates and emergence of artificial intelligence (AI), adherence to academic integrity has become of utmost importance in any educational institution. However, it is becoming more challenging for instructors to maintain it, although active steps are being taken to combat the problem of academic dishonesty. Since the frequency of violations is growing, it is essential to investigate the students' perceptions of academic integrity's role in their education. This literature review article aims to make an overview of previous research on students' perceptions of academic integrity. In particular, it will identify what factors influence adherence to academic integrity, the main types of its violations, and the reasons leading to academic misconduct. Thus, the findings will deepen instructors' understanding of the students' perspectives in detail to appropriately address any arising challenges. To achieve this aim, the analysis of 35 articles will be presented most of which were published in Eric, EBSCO, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and JSTOR between 2016 and 2024 years.

Keywords: academic integrity, academic dishonesty, violations, factors, perceptions.

#### Introduction

Academic integrity has gained a sufficient amount of attention in the educational sphere over the past few decades. McCabe and Pavela (2004) defined it as a commitment to the following values: "honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage" (p.6), which are in turn seen as the cornerstones of academic integrity. Thus, strict adherence to them is a must for every student, instructor, and researcher; otherwise, the value and credibility of their work will be lost. However, there exist numerous cases of academic dishonesty which is referred to as "any deceitful or unfair act intended to produce a more desirable outcome on an exam, paper, homework assignment, or other assessment of learning" (Chow et al., 2021, p.17). Plagiarism, cheating, misrepresentation, collusion, deception, and bribery – all of these misconducts imply violations of academic integrity. Also, with the emergence of artificial intelligence tools, such as Chat GPT, Quillbot, and others alike, the idea of preserving academic integrity has been heavily challenged. For this reason, one of the main goals of any academic institution is to continue upholding high standards of academic integrity to promote learning and academic growth, help to build trusting relationships between members of the academic community and acknowledge the contribution made by everyone involved.

With the advent of the latest technological advancements and lack of awareness of how to use them appropriately, students frequently violate the rules which results in the loss of justice. One of the main factors that contributes to a high rate of instances of academic dishonesty at the university level is a lack of awareness of the consequences. According to Jensen et al. (2002), the majority of students start violating academic integrity in high school and are not punished for this behavior. This leads to continuing to be engaged in academic dishonesty at university too. However, the situation is different in higher education where punishments for violations range from receiving unsatisfactory grades to being expelled from an academic institution. Secondly, the existence of multiple forms of academic dishonesty worsens the situation. In a broad sense, these types can be categorized into four groups: plagiarism, collusion, cheating, and fabrication which are further subdivided into smaller categories. Although students are generally aware of violating rules, they consider certain forms, like sharing answers to tests or cheating on home assignments, insignificant cases. This claim is supported by DiPaulo's (2022) findings which concluded that 80% of students engage in academic dishonesty

and 70% find excuses for this. The reasons for violating academic integrity primarily include fear of failure, cognitive overload, desire to help friends or aim to get higher results in exams.

Nowadays, with the rising concerns regarding the preservation of academic integrity, active steps are being taken worldwide to minimize the acts of academic dishonesty. In fact, the concept of academic integrity is not new: the first attempt, the introduction of honor codes, was made in the USA in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Following this, educational institutions have been designing specific policies to maintain and promote academic integrity. However, nowadays certain countries, in particular those outside the European Union, are encountering numerous challenges in terms of maintaining academic integrity. As Denisova-Schmidt (2016) claimed, their students are four times more prone to violations than their European peers. This is explained by the existing corruption in the educational sphere as the author explained.

Regarding the situation in Kazakhstan, problems related to maintaining academic integrity are still severe (Lykova, 2023). Therefore, several necessary steps have been taken in Kazakhstan. In 2018, the Academic Integrity League was established, and currently, 17 universities have joined it. The aim of it is to improve the quality of education by promoting the ten underlying principles of academic integrity. In addition, starting in 2019, the Turnitin application began to be used in all universities to diminish the chances of cheating and plagiarism, and it is projected to be implemented in secondary schools in the near future (Askarov, 2019).

Also, nowadays, there are a lot of stakeholders involved in the promotion of academic integrity. First, there are policies developed by governments and universities which set specific rules and regulations that should be followed by each student. In addition, the role of instructors cannot be neglected as they primarily interact with students and are able to instill values of academic integrity in them. Last but not least, Gunton (2022) mentioned the positive influence of librarians since they not only assist with searching literary sources, rather they can also help both instructors and students in "awareness raising and capacity building around ethical scholarly behavior" (p.156).

Although there has been extensive research done on identifying what academic integrity is, instructors' role, and behaviors leading to its disruption, students' perceptions of it are still underestimated. Thus, this research will focus on identifying students' attitudes towards academic integrity based on the key factors impacting their adherence. The findings will be presented after a comprehensive analysis of the existing literary sources.

# **Theoretical Insights from Previous Research**

Nowadays, the cases of violating academic integrity are rising dramatically. As different types of academic dishonesty exist, Simmons (2018) claimed that nearly every student has breached the rules more than once while studying. Another research conducted by Bazylkhanova and Dalelkhanova (2019) also determined that students are mostly unaware of academic integrity and narrow it down only to the elimination of plagiarism. Consequently, the main aim of this literature review is to analyze articles related to the types of academic dishonesty, reasons leading to violations, and students' awareness of academic integrity. To write it, the authors analyzed 35 scholarly articles published in Eric, EBSCO, Web of Science, Google Scholar and JSTOR databases. While reading them, the authors classified the resources into several categories: definitions of academic integrity and dishonesty, students' perceptions of academic integrity, factors influencing the adherence to academic integrity, main types of academic dishonesty, and reasons for violating academic integrity. This categorization helped to compile this theoretical review. Also, the majority of sources used for this article were published between 2016 and 2024 to present accurate findings.

## Definitions of academic integrity and academic dishonesty

Before starting to discuss the students' awareness of academic integrity, the terms "academic integrity" and "academic dishonesty" should be specified. Concerning the notion of academic integrity, the majority of students and teachers understand that highly ethical environment should be maintained in the learning process. Therefore, a clear definition is provided in ENAI glossary, which describes it as "the compliance with ethical and professional principles, standards, practices, and

consistent system of values, that serves as guidance for making decisions and taking actions in education, research, and scholarship". In addition, Boehm et al. (2019) argued that academic integrity also implies that each person is responsible not only for maintaining it himself but should also look after their peers to create an equitable environment. Also, skills and values of academic integrity should be explicitly taught to students (Turner &Beemsterboer, 2003).

Concerning the violations of academic integrity, it is possible to say that they are not new. As Bowers (1964) noted, their first indications became apparent in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when university students started to cheat home assignments from each other. Due to the changes in human values and advent of technology, the violations of academic integrity are much more rampant. In addition, the most acute problem is seen not in the students who disobey the rule but in the collegiate culture that supports cheating (Alschuler & Blimling, 1995). For this reason, even though academic institutions try to combat academic dishonesty, many cases are still not given due attention. Therefore, academic dishonesty is defined as "student's use of unauthorized assistance with intent to deceive" (Alschuler & Blimling, 1995, p.123).

# Students' perceptions of academic integrity

The way students perceive academic integrity is seen as one of the most important factors which contributes to the maintenance of it. Based on the literature review, it is possible to say that students have diverse viewpoints regarding academic integrity. Woith et al. (2012) stated that nursing students mostly had positive associations with this notion and interpreted it as being trustworthy, fair, and honest. Also, they directly related it to achieving their professional outcomes which included professionalism and expertise. Similar findings were presented by Elzubeir and Rizk (2013) who agreed that medical students viewed academic integrity as a positive element and mostly did not engage in any academic misconduct. However, contradictory findings were obtained by Stone (2023): his participants, representatives of business faculty, considered this term to be frightening since they were concerned about the consequences of breaching academic integrity. In addition, these students lacked awareness of what constitutes academic dishonesty, claimed that their academic misconduct was unintentional and defended themselves when they disobeyed the rules.

Concerning the teaching majors, it was revealed that students held different perceptions. Eret and Ok (2014) claimed that students majoring in teaching specialties were more prone to use Internet to complete home assignments and self-plagiarize than their peers from other specialties. They also observed a correlation between academic dishonesty and year of study and gender. Final-year students and males were more likely to be caught disobeying the rules. Similar situation is described in Di Paulo's (2022) study, in which pre-service teachers acknowledged the importance of adhering to academic integrity. However, around 70% of them improperly cited sources, shared answers to tests and home assignments with their peers, or cheated under the exam conditions, all of which are related to academic dishonesty. In addition, the author explained that such attitudes can be explained by gross faculty negligence and similar peer behavior. Similarly, Calovic (2023) claimed that students view academic integrity as necessary but attribute its violations to a lack of knowledge, control, and strict punishments. Finally, Espinosaa and Toquero (2018) claimed that those students who actively wrote research papers were the least likely to commit academic misconduct. They were usually more aware of paraphrasing techniques, plagiarism issues, and proper citations, helping them to be more honest with themselves and others.

## Factors influencing the adherence to academic integrity

There exist a number of factors that are related to the adherence of academic integrity, but in broad sense they can be classified into two categories: internal and external ones. The internal factor is mainly attributed to the students' perceptions of academic integrity. It implies that awareness of academic integrity should be risen (Thakkar & Weisfeld-Spolter, 2012).

More factors are described as external, and one of them is a mode of delivery. Due to the fact that some subjects are conducted onsite, while some others are online, the level of maintaining academic integrity is different. Basically, in the online format students are more likely to cheat, and several studies have confirmed that. Lanier (2006) that students had more opportunities to cheat

online as their instructors paid significantly less attention to cases of academic dishonesty. Consequently, the grades were moderately higher in online classes as compared with offline. Sostaric (2022) believed that cheating in online classes challenges the credibility of obtained degrees. Janke et al. (2021) investigated in what ways academic integrity was breached in online lessons than offline. In the same direction, more violations were noticed in online classes, which were explained by an easier access to prohibited sources and sharing answers in group chats. However, other forms of academic dishonesty did not show any significant differences.

Another external factor is the role of instructors in maintaining academic integrity. Chirikov et al. (2020) concluded that those instructors who explicitly taught about academic integrity and exhibited strong intolerance to its violations encountered fewer cases of academic dishonesty. Therefore, the authors suggested that instructors are the key figures in this process who should actively teach about academic integrity. However, sometimes they are unable to pay due attention to violations of academic integrity. As Lofstrom (2014) and MacLeod (2020) revealed, in some educational institutions, instructors are unaware of academic integrity policies; as a result, they observed the deteriorations of it every year. This negligence was due to excessive overwork or incomplete institutional policies.

# Main types of academic dishonesty

Before moving on to the discussion of the main types of academic dishonesty, it is important to define this term. According to Chow et al. (2021) academic dishonesty is commonly referred to as "any deceitful or unfair act intended to produce a more desirable outcome on an exam, paper, homework assignment, or other assessment of learning" (p.5). Thus, the following types are considered violations of academic integrity: deception, outside help, sabotage, fabrication, cheating, and plagiarism.

A vast body of research has been done on identifying unethical behaviors in education. Based on Munir's et al. (2021) opinion, the most frequent types of academic dishonesty were electronic cheating, sabotage, and seeking outside help. Subsequent research conducted by Alleyne and Phillips (2011) showed that copying from groupmates and lying behaviors appeared to be the most frequent ones while the use of cheat sheets and invention of data were classified as the least widespread ones. A more recent article written by Anitha and Sundaram (2021) emphasized an increasing trend for cheating and plagiarism which was supported by Landa-Blanco et al. (2021), who also pointed out mutual help on examinations. In addition, the authors agreed that those students who were more prone to cheating found justifications for their behaviors and did not believe in their immorality since these traces back to school years. Another area of concern is an actual growth of using AI in education. Nowadays, it is frequently used to complete home assignments or take final examination. Nerdynav (2024) identified that approximately 43% of students are active uses of Chat GPT and similar AI-powered applications, implying that action should be taken to diminish the likelihood of cheating.

## Reasons for violating academic integrity

Academic dishonesty can be caused by several reasons. However, the most predominant cause for these violations is students' lack of awareness of what is implied by academic integrity. Therefore, based on Zangla's (2023) viewpoint, they sometimes cannot identify the severity of their actions and future implications. Despite this, the author claimed that students are capable of noticing their peers' unethical behavior and even reporting about it.

Furthermore, Bachore (2016) examined the causes of academic dishonesty in two cases: plagiarism in home assignments and cheating under exam conditions. The plagiarism issue was mainly caused by contract cheating and improper citations of Internet resources. Cheating on exams was mainly explained by the irrelevance between course materials and exam questions, desire to receive high grades, and lack of time to answer the questions. Anitha and Sundaram (2021) had a similar view on the causes of violations and added conformity and desire to justify parental expectations as the main reasons. In her study, freshman and sophomore students reported being

pressured by parents to enable them achieve academic success. In addition, as they observed their peers' unethical behavior, they became more tolerant to violating the rules by themselves.

Kennet and Shkodkina (2018) conducted comparative research between American and Ukrainian students. Their results revealed that American students showed violations of academic integrity two times less than their Ukrainian peers due to their differences in the education system. Also, the authors proposed a classification of reasons for academic dishonesty: internal individual and external contextual factors. Internal individual category implied limited awareness of academic integrity and orientation to get higher grades while lack of personal control and peer behavior comprised the second category.

## Conclusion

By emphasizing values - such as honesty, fairness, and responsibility, academic integrity remains a cornerstone of educational quality. This literature review highlighted that even though institutions try to uphold high standards of academic integrity, students lack awareness of what constitutes this notion; therefore, they frequently engage in dishonest practices. Overall, it was determined that academic integrity is a frightening term for many students; however, it does not impede them from breaking the rules. Plagiarizing home assignments, cheating on examinations, collusion, and other behaviors are prevalent in academic institutions, and what is more worrying, students frequently find justifications for them.

Regarding the factors influencing adherence to academic integrity, it was revealed that the mode of delivery and instructors' roles were important. In cases when students had online lessons, or the instructors did not pay due attention, instances of academic dishonesty were more likely to occur. It mostly happened because of the irrelevance of exam questions, the desire to justify parental expectations, limited knowledge of the subject matter, and dishonest peer behavior.

To conclude, it is recommended that more steps be taken to promote academic integrity on behalf of institutions, governments, and educators. Building an ethical academic culture will enhance education outcomes and foster each individual to feel responsible for upholding the standards, thus ensuring the overall quality of education.

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# БАКАЛАВРИАТ СТУДЕНТТЕРІНІҢ EFL САБАҚТАРЫНДАҒЫ АКАДЕМИЯЛЫҚ АДАЛДЫҚТЫ ҚАБЫЛДАУЫ: БАР ӘДЕБИЕТТЕРГЕ ШОЛУ

Андатпа. Плагиат деңгейінің өсуі мен жасанды интеллектің (ЖИ) пайда болуымен академиялық адалдықты сақтау кез келген оқу орнында басты маңызға айналды. Алайда, академиялық адалдық мәселесімен күресу үшін белсенді шаралар қабылданса да, мұғалімдерге оны сақтау қиынға соғуда. Академиялық адалдықты бұзу жиілігі артып келе жатқандықтан, студенттердің академиялық адалдықтың білім беру жүйесіндегі рөліне қатысты түсініктерін зерттеу маңызды. Бұл әдебиеттерге шолу мақаласы академиялық адалдықты қабылдауы туралы алдыңғы зерттеулерге шолу жасауға бағытталған.

Атап айтқанда, әсер ететін факторларды, академиялық адалдықты бұзушылықтың негізгі түрлерін және академиялық тәртіпсіздікке әкелетін себептерді анықтайды.

Нәтижелер оқытушыларға студенттердің көзқарастарын тереңірек түсінуге мүмкіндік береді, туындаған проблемаларды тиімді шешуге көмектеседі. Осы мақсатқа жету үшін 35 мақаланың талдауы ұсынылатын болады, олардың көпшілігі 2016 және 2024 жылдар аралығында Егіс, EBSCO, Web of Science, Google Scholar және JSTOR-да жарияланған.

**Түйін сөздер:** академиялық адалдық, академиялық адалдық бұзушылықтар, факторлар, түсініктер.

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# ВОСПРИЯТИЕ СТУДЕНТАМИ БАКАЛАВРИАТА АКАДЕМИЧЕСКОЙ ЧЕСТНОСТИ НА УРОКАХ EFL: ОБЗОР ЛИТЕРАТУРЫ

Аннотация. С увеличением уровня плагиата и использования искусственного интеллекта (ИИ), соблюдение академической честности стало иметь первостепенную важность в любом образовательном учреждении. Однако преподавателям становится все сложнее ее поддерживать, несмотря на то что предпринимаются активные меры по борьбе с академической нечестностью. Поскольку частота нарушений растет, важно изучить как студенты понимают роль академической честности в образовании. Целью данной статьи является обзор предыдущих исследований о восприятии студентами академической честности. В частности, будет выявлено какие факторы влияют на соблюдение академической честности, основные виды ее нарушений и причины, приводящие к нарушениям. Таким

образом, результаты углубят понимание преподавателями точки зрения студентов чтобы в дальнейшем надлежащим образом решать любые возникающие проблемы. Для достижения этой цели будет представлен анализ 35 статей, большинство из которых были опубликованы в Eric, EBSCO, Web of Science, Google Scholar и JSTOR в период с 2016 по 2024 годы.

**Ключевые слова:** академическая честность, академическая нечестность, нарушения, факторы, восприятие

Received 25 May 2024